

# YOUTH NEWSLETTER

No.6

December, 1981

## JOY AT CHRISTMAS TIME?

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by Hans Christoph Hermes

*I'm afraid during these weeks too many words about Christmas might be spoken. I am also skeptical about my own words. I'm afraid of the many honestly meant speeches of people in the churches, that - instead of helping understand reality - mask reality. What is it, that shall be celebrated? At Christmas: the birth of Jesus. Then: his life, his death and his resurrection. What does that really mean to us? To me?*

*I was looking for an expression for all this process, that God started with his people. "Word of God" occurred to me. That does not mean talking correct theological sentences as we hear them every day, not making words.*

*The word of God touches me, his spirit moves me. Not only words and their sound can do that. I listen to God, and I am moved for reacting. Unity and oneness of listening and acting. If I do not react, I did not listen to the Word of God. I did not understand.*

*God's Word is the truth. It shows me reality and tells me who I am. God accepts me, and he calls for me.*

*Thinking about what he perhaps wants me to do, I become meditative. Sometimes it makes me sad, sometimes happy, sometimes both. I become calm and quiet. It's not always what I want to do. It may help me to open my mouth if I want to be low, and it may help me to keep my mouth shut, if I want to be noisy. Very often I don't know, what it might mean to me, because I don't think about it. Reality is often horrible. God's Word helps being "his child", in this reality.*

*One example of God's promise to his people: Jesaja 9,2-6*

*His people crying to the Lord: Jesaja 63, 15-16*

*Being ready to listen to his word: Luke 1, 28-38.*

# EDITORIAL - by Matthias Schmale

Can the Youth Newsletter address or even cover all the ideological or political standpoints - from the most conservative to the most liberal - of its "youthful" readership? Will it, for example, turn pietistic groups off if we put a strong political statement into the Youth Newsletter? Or will it turn off so-called leftists if we print articles coming from conservatives? These questions refer to a subject which we (the editors of this newsletter) discussed recently while selecting stories for this issue. I personally think that it is impossible to write up stories which will suit everybody. Rather it seems very important to me that we include all kinds of articles, even if they might be too critical, too one-sided or too provocative. The Youth Newsletter can be both a source of information and a forum for opinions which might stimulate discussions on controversial subjects. At the same time I realize that we cannot only print extremist points of view, but that in some way or another it is important to find a balance.

At our recent editors' meeting we agreed that the Youth Newsletter can only be meaningful if we get feed-back (i.e. news stories, comments, features, etc.) from all over the world. In this issue we have already tried to include as many stories which were sent to us as possible. In my opinion it is getting increasingly essential to get more and more information from the so-called "Third World." In his comment on page 5 and 6 Hans Christoph looks at the relationship between the "North" and the "South" from a "Western" perspective.

Something which we have talked about quite a bit recently is the follow-up of the international youth consultation, which was held in the Federal Republic of Germany this July. The participants there made a very strong statement on the subject of "ecumenism" in which they said, "We acknowledge that our Lutheran churches have not initiated sufficiently in striving for Christian unity." As young people we have the chance to set an example for close cooperation with the so-called "ecumenical movement". In fact, I think it would be an act of stupidity if we would not try to benefit from the experience which ecumenical organizations like the World Council of Churches' (WCC) sub-unit on youth or the World Student Christian Federation, etc. have gained during the last few years. In this issue we have several ecumenical contributions in the form of an article by the staff of the WCC's sub-unit on youth and a short notice on the steward applications for the 1983 WCC assembly. Unfortunately we were unable to find some humor with the Lutherans, so that we had to rely on cartoons from Colin Wheeler, who is a cartoonist for the WCC monthly One World.

It is extremely hard not to become totally pessimistic when looking at this world's problems and negative aspects. Even now in the month of December, as we are approaching an actually very joyful event in the Christian life, it is difficult to forget everything and to be satisfied and happy. Recently here in the Ecumenical Center the youth of the house, that is young people from different international organizations, led a worship under the theme "Joy at Christmas". We conclude this newsletter with a few thoughts and a prayer on this subject.

## Responsible editors:

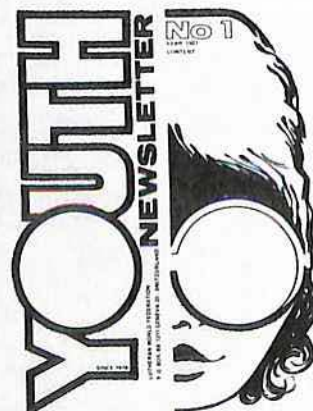
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A big THANK YOU VERY MUCH goes to Karin Kaukorat, who is the typist of this issue of the Youth Newsletter.

*This is a suggestion for the cover page of next year's Youth Newsletters. If you have any comments or other suggestions please write to the above address.*



"I hope that youth desk will be meaningful instrument for LWF youth constituency," Alf says.

"I hope that the youth desk will be a meaningful instrument for the Lutheran World Federation's (LWF) youth constituency and through it adequate attention will be given to youth needs and concerns within the LWF," the Rev. Alf Idland said in an interview this month. Alf, who took up his position as the LWF's first official youth coordinator in October, added that the youth desk "could help the LWF become more aware of the large youth resources it has."

Talking about the future tasks of the youth desk, Alf pointed to what had happened in the field of women's work after the special women's desk was established, saying that his task would be to respond to youth needs and concerns which so far have not been taken care of properly. He said that without any staff person specially responsible for a certain "area of concern" this area immediately gets lower priorities. In this connection Alf mentioned that young people in the 1970s were demanding youth participation at all levels without putting much emphasis on a staff person for youth matters. He said that the "idea as such is good since youth participation is certainly needed, but it is also a fact that special programs or events, e.g. youth consultations or workshops will only take place if there is someone to organize and coordinate them."

According to Alf "reactions in the LWF to the radical attitude and demands of the youth delegates at the 1970 LWF assembly in Evian (France) virtually put an end to any kind of youth work for ten years." He said that he would in the beginning go about his work very cautiously and try to find out some of the demands and needs of youth. "Some of the concrete things I will have to do in the immediate future is to get going the planning process for the 1984 pre-assembly youth gathering in Budapest and to follow up on proposals made in Asia for 1982," Alf said. He pointed out that some of next year's commission meetings - a commission is the governing committee for a department between two assemblies - would focus on "youth concerns" and said that he would try and attend these to get into contact with some youth resource persons.

The Rev. Risto Lehtonen, director of the department of church cooperation (DCC), said recently that greatest youth needs among the churches are "the developing and training for youth leadership." He noted that an "overwhelming" number of requests have asked for an "effective exchange of information and some coordination among the youth ministries of Lutheran churches in all parts of the world."

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In his new role, Alf hopes to answer those requests to help more youth become sensitive to the problems facing them in various parts of the world. "I see part of my job," he said, "as helping place different perspectives on youth work in churches in the United States and Europe by reminding them of the problems and possibilities of youth in the Third World."

Mentioning the World Council of Churches (WCC) sub-unit on youth, Alf said that he sees the LWF youth desk as "supplementary and not competing resource for the WCC's youth desk." He referred to the international youth consultation, held in July this year in the Federal Republic of Germany, which had stated that "As Lutheran young people representing our respective churches, we firmly believe in the universal Christian church." The international youth consultation further stated that cooperation with ecumenical youth organizations and ecumenical youth bodies "should be strengthened and encouraged."

"And that is the direction I want to move in", Alf said. The new youth coordinator has got a difficult but important task ahead of him. As Risto Lehtonen said, "A church that ignores its youth is committing institutional suicide."

### In the midst of intellectuals - by Peter Moss and Cathy Fluter

(Peter and Cathy work for the World Council of Churches' sub-unit on youth)

*"Young people are afraid to talk in the midst of intellectuals and holy people wearing fascinating ecclesiastical costumes and ornamentation".*

That is a comment from the Pacific on a major WCC conference. Happily it is not true when young people come together ecumenically (and we don't think it needs to be true when the fascinating costumes are around, but more of that later). In Torino, Italy, last June a very special group of young people came together for a week and were not afraid to talk. They came from the eight ecumenical regions of the world, and from a wide variety of confessional backgrounds for the climax of our series of meetings on "Faith and Justice".

Since 1976 we have been building up a new ecumenical youth movement, with increasing cooperation between the regions. Torino was the first time that all eight regions (and SYNDESMOS = World Fellowship of Orthodox Youth Organizations) met on an equal basis with equal delegations (Women were fairly well represented - Asia and the Pacific were "men only" but all the other full delegations had at least two women out of five). So what did it all mean? Another expensive ecumenical jamboree with good discussions and no impact anywhere? A collection of lofty ideals and intellectual resolutions? A boost to the travel agents and Swissair?

One of the participants said at the meeting, "I was sitting in the opening session and I looked round the group and I remembered hearing you talk two years ago about the dream of the movement and the bringing

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together of all the regions. And as I looked around I thought to myself, 'This is it. It's happened. The dream has come true'." Yes, it was a dream come true. And at the same time it was a fresh beginning, a moving from one phase into another. Above all it was a time of sharing at a very personal level. We shared the big national/international issues and the big local/personal issues; the struggles for justice and the struggles of faith decisions/development.

When I first had direct contact with the WCC Youth program 10 years ago - and what a shock that it has been so long! - it was fashionable for some people to pour contempt on faith and anyone who thought it might be important. It was not easy to struggle through to any affirmation of faith in the face of someone who derided it and declared that the only important thing was the struggle for political and economic liberation. And it certainly wasn't easy to see how much each had to learn from the other. Things have changed. In Torino there was a tremendous power in the expression of wholeness - faith and justice are part of one life commitment. The message from the participants recognizes that: "the Youth Sub-Unit's work has really only just begun" (- it doesn't seem like that but we know what you mean!). Increasingly we will be putting our energy into Assembly preparations. And we are doing so with the impetus from the meetings of the last few years.

The intellectuals will be there (at the Assembly). Holy people, we hope, will be there. Many fascinating ecclesiastical costumes and ornamentations will be there. Perhaps the travel agents will be able to retire on their commissions. And youth will be there. And women. And other ecclesiastically/ecumenically disadvantaged groups. Will young people and women be afraid to talk? We hope not and we believe not. And as we are constantly finding - they have plenty to say.

*Intellectuals and other fascinating people watch out!*

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### Comment on 'we' from the 'north' and 'you' from the 'south'

by Hans Christoph Hermes (Hans Christoph, a 27-year old German, this year completed his theological studies and is presently spending some months in the Lutheran World Federation's general secretariat as a youth intern).

I can think of many ways I could contribute to this issue of the Youth Newsletter. At the same time I notice that my thoughts are nothing special, as in a brain-storm fashion I just repeat what has been thought and said for many years. I begin with a few personal remarks and then conclude with two comprehending theses.

I have lived all my life in the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) and from there originate my ideas and thoughts - on the basis of the history of my country. I write from a specific European point of view, and not

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from a global perspective. (Words like "we, our etc." are an expression of this.)

After a seven-week visit to Tanzania two years ago and after being with the LWF in Geneva for seven weeks, I begin to sense the cultural variety that exists and how small the section out of this variety is that has influenced my life so far. I share the feeling of helplessness and bitter aggressiveness of many young people in my country when thinking of problems like increasing armament, atomic power, East-West conflict, hunger in this world and economic relationships with oppressive states. In meeting people of other countries this helplessness relevates itself. I am learning to look at European problems from the view of different contexts. I am learning to understand and endure conflicts. I no longer find quick apparent solutions to these problems and no longer present these problems as the right ones. Many Christians think that the theology of liberation and black theology from the South of Africa is what we should do in Europe. In our materialistically rich industrialized countries we feel that we are bored and pitiable victims, whose idealism and real perception is oppressed in consuming. We need a little more fight and a clear opponent. Then we are thrilled by the fighting attitude of "the" Christians in Asia, Africa and Latin America and feel tiny, guilty and miserable because we are so rich and bored and cannot help you. But we have to help you!!



I am sarcastic about this because I have made the experience that new theological and social approaches like the ones mentioned above turn into idealistic phrases and progressive showing-off attitudes in another context (e.g. the European context). Theology of liberation or black theology, etc. are important for us, because they challenge us to think. But they cannot be a substitute for our own theology. We can be happy if there is hope outside and inside the churches in other parts of the world. This hope does not relieve us of the painful task to radically change our own life, but obliges us to influence our "Northern" problems in a tenacious slowness so that we do not destroy ourselves. Maybe you can give us ideas for the solution of our questions. In any case we no longer consider our own problems to be the most important ones in the world, because we get to know yours.

#### *Our problems?*

Although we are materialistically very rich, many are "getting poorer" on a human level: it is, for example, very difficult to make friends. We can see and hear a lot of television and radio programs, but very rarely do we

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see our neighbours with our own eyes. We say a lot of important words, but seldom do they personally reach the one next to us. We drive cars and drink alcohol, but we tread on the spot when we try to escape into a dream world. Our medical achievements are excellent, but still our patients in the hospitals are lonely and our psychiatric clinics are filled with thousands of people. Our countries are covered with destroying weapons which are supposed to scare off the enemy, but yet we do not feel secure.

*But we want to help you'.*

Our way of living no longer sets examples, at least not for ourselves. "A refugee would like to have your problems" is printed on a poster hanging on one of the doors here in the Ecumenical Centre. You can maybe help us to realize that our problems are not at the centre of this world. That might make us more calm, more patient and more modest.

My two theses, which I mentioned in the beginning are the following:

- 1) We should not expect solutions to our self-made European problems from spectacular developments and demands in Asia, Africa and Latin America.
- 2) The knowledge on the life of the countries in the "South" can broaden our consciousness on our limits and chances, on our poverty and wealth.

Why do I write these thoughts here? The LWF Youth Newsletter can be a turntable for all the information that comes into Geneva from the member churches. People from the "South" can concretely report about their activities, their needs and experiences. We in the "North" might have some general information on problems in "the Third World", but we need your reports to get some more exact ideas about the life of young people in your countries. Maybe you can even send us comments on the reports which come to you from the "North"?

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### LWF scholarship program (Interview with Otto Immonen)

"Applicants from 94 LWF member churches from 47 countries have been mediated to 54 countries", according to Otto Immonen (LWF, Geneva). About 150-200 people apply for a study program every year. Almost half of them are accepted. Money is given for short practical training programs and for theological and other academic study programs. There are two conditions for all programs financed by LWF: the program wished for must not be available in the applicant's home country, and the home church must show it's interest in the applicant's program. Because of that applications to LWF may only be sent through the home church.

The 15th of October every year is the last date for an application. Otto Immonen then asks three people from LWF and WCC (World Council of Churches)

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to write a commentary on the application. These people know the applicant's study theme either in substance or regional. In January the Governing Committee comes together and gives final acceptance to the applicants.

It's up to the applicant and his member church to develop a study program. What are the applicant's needs on studying to be more helpful to his church, which are the needs of the church? Where can the study program be absolved? This last question also could be answered by the secretary Otto Immonen in Geneva, who is having contact to different institutions.

Until today about half of the scholars were from Europe or USA, the other two third came from Asia, Africa and Latin America.

Many LWF member churches having material resources support the program not only by money, but also in giving room to live or places in a running study or practice project. This kind of indirect support shows it's really the churches programs. More information you can get at

Lutheran World Federation  
Scholarship Office  
P.O. Box 66  
CH-1211 Geneva 20/Switzerland

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### Tanzanian youth consultation criticizes allegation that "young people are the leaders of tomorrow"

The participants at an international youth consultation, held in Tanzania in this September, criticized the allegation that "young people are the leaders of tomorrow", which implies that youth are not yet participating in the "running wheel" of the church or the state. They stated that "youth are not leaders in the waiting room" and therefore have to play a role in the society to which they belong.

The 43 delegates from eight countries called for a "youth day of prayer for peace, justice and freedom". The consultation, which was sponsored by the Vereinigte Evangelische Mission (United Evangelical Mission), based in Wuppertal in the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG), addressed the churches and church youth organizations asking them to give youth more possibilities of participation in decision-making processes and to give them the chance to develop an evangelistic life style.

In a letter to the editors of the Youth Newsletter, Evans Lushakuzi, from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania points out that the problems which were discussed by the delegates were in no way different from those discussed at the international youth consultation in Urach, FRG, this July.

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Evans writes that "the international situation did not escape the consultation in Tanzania. The escalation of the arms race and the international economic order were issues of great concern."

Evans continues, "The time has come for re-thinking on how church structures can be made as flexible as possible in order to ensure full participation of young people. In my opinion this was one of the major issues on which the two consultations focused their attention". Evans points out in his letter that "reading through the Youth Newsletter for October 1981 I realize that youth problems are universal." The last youth newsletter was a special edition on the Urach consultation.

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Whose cross am I carrying? - Was theme of Papua New Guinea youth gathering - by Rev. Sakey Geyamgoling (Sakey, who coordinated this year's camp, is a full-time chaplain in Lae city)-

In Papua New Guinea 300 young people were gathered for an Easter Bible Camp April 17-20 this year. Young people had come from most parts of the country - there was even a group who had travelled all the way down the dusty highway from the heart of Papua New Guinea highlands, known as the town of Mt. Hagen. Youth groups came also from Goroka, Yonki, Kainantu and Lae.

*Whose cross am I carrying?* was the theme of the camp. A high school chaplain, the Rev. Mutengkec Wahasokac, was the inspiring speaker and bible study leader. Through his lectures the participants were challenged to discuss and share what Good Friday and Easter really meant to them.

Through singing and sharing and listening to the Easter message the group was able to come close together. And one of the highlights was the Easter Sunrise Service celebrated under a clear cool sky early Sunday morning. Also receiving Holy Communion that early morning made some of the faces literally shine to show how happy and excited they were to know that their Saviour was not dead, but that He had risen to live eternally. The power of sin and death was taken away, and Easter means that they themselves would rise to live with Jesus.

The success of the camp was so great that everybody at a night fellowship expressed their wish to having a similar bible camp during Easter 1982. A committee was established to consider whether a new event should be planned for next year. And it concluded positively that the Easter Bible Camp become an annual event gathering all the youth of the Lutheran church. The Goroka youth group and Rev. Mutengkec accepted the proposal that they host the 1982 Easter camp. And Rev. Jim Strelan will lead the bible study next year under the theme: HOW CAN I KNOW THAT I AM A CHRISTIAN? - a burning question among many young people.

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So when this year's camp came to an end, it meant the beginning of our annual gathering together. And therefore also the young people when they had to break up and leave - greeting and hugging one another - it was less with a feeling of saying good-bye than with a hope of "SEEING YOU NEXT YEAR".

We hope to have a lot of young people come to the camp next year. So through this article we want to extend an invitation to youth groups as well as individuals to plan on coming to the Easter Bible Camp 1982.

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### Are you going to London? - by Alf Idland

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If you are - either for study or just for a shorter stay - this article provides you information which might prove to be very precious. In London there is - how many knew? - an INTERNATIONAL STUDENT CENTRE with a student chaplain in charge. At present the Rev. Mauri Wahlroos is there - offering students coming to London many kinds of assistance.

He is easily available on telephone which he proved by the fact that the YN was able to reach him on our first try. And getting him on the line, he provided us with the following valuable information:

- THAT the centre includes a hostel providing accommodation for about 85 students. There are even some double rooms and three family flats. This means that you should opt for the centre if you are trying to find a living place in London;
- THAT applying at least two months ahead of your planned arrival in London the chaplain has a fair chance to work out something for you. But of course, the earlier the better. However - you can be lucky and get there one day to have your room from the next;
- THAT if you are a Lutheran student, also with a record of being active in your congregation, you are given a priority in most cases;
- THAT coming from Africa, Asia or Latin America you are even in a better position to get a room;
- THAT whatever your faith and cultural background is, the centre is open for you;
- THAT even for a shorter stay in London - like a week or two - you may be lucky to get a reasonable accommodation at the centre. And during the holiday season, which in England means July-August-September, the hostel is free for everybody, not only youth and students, to stay in during a stopover in London;
- THAT since the Rev. Wahlroos is the contact person for several scholarship agencies he is able to assist in applying for scholarships for study in England and also in helping with many practical matters which face a student coming for enrollment in a British university; ( M O R E )

- THAT the centre runs many different activities: weekly gatherings, special parties at Christmas and Easter, excursions etc. Also people living outside the centre are welcome to join these activities;
- THAT being in London on a Saturday you may be lucky enough to join an outing arranged by the centre which has its own minibus for the purpose. This means leaving in early morning and being back in the evening;
- THAT Sunday evening at 19.30 here is an informal service in the chapel of the centre, followed by a social gathering in the club room;
- THAT if you want to know more about the INTERNATIONAL LUTHERAN STUDENT CENTRE - and there is a lot more to learn - then just write or phone and the chaplain will provide you with the necessary information:

Rev. Mauri Wahlroos  
Chaplain  
International Lutheran Student Centre  
30 Thanet Street  
London WC1 9QH/ENGLAND  
Tel. 01-388-4848

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## NO TO NUCLEAR WEAPONS!

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Impressions from the Public Hearing in Amsterdam, by Alf Idland.

### *The scenario:*

*The political situation getting so desperate that someone pushes the button which will unleash an unimaginable catastrophe on this earth in terms of a nuclear war. Millions of people wiped out in minutes - and the survivors in such horrible conditions that they will envy the dead. A whole civilization destroyed and maybe even human life as such exterminated.*



Thousands of young people have in recent months come out into the streets of European cities to march for peace, and against nuclear war and armament race. It started with the long "peace march" from Copenhagen to Paris in July/August, and has spread to most of the big cities in Europe. The looming threat of a nuclear holocaust seems to take its psychological toll. Nobody can live under such a threat of total annihilation and still keep the hope and the expectations towards the future.

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It was a gloomy picture of our world today that was presented to the hearing group and the observers at the "Public Hearing on Nuclear Weapons and Disarmament", held by the World Council of Churches in Amsterdam, November 23-27, 1981. Witnesses with expert scientific background as well as politicians who had been involved in decision-making at the highest level were there to give their testimonies.

Even if everybody present at the hearing once again had to admit the complexity of today's situation where no easy solutions can be produced. One also got some glimpses of hope, beyond that of our Christian faith. The situation is certainly dark, but not hopeless.

50% of the current nuclear stockpile can be cut back, even unilaterally, and still the West will have enough destructive capability to keep its deterrence. Such a fact supported by highly expert witnesses will counter the argument prevailing until now that any unilateral initiative will dangerously upset the delicate balance of power and thus make war likelier. Since it apparently can be very well contended that this is not the case, it may become a moral imperative for the churches to press for this as one path to be pursued in order to break the vicious circle of the armament race. This question of taking an initiative, even a unilateral one, will have to get more attention.

Also the relationship between the armament race and development is one aspect that has to be taken more seriously. Huge financial resources are wasted for armament purposes. What if these resources were used for development in various areas of the world? To quote one of the witnesses referring to the question of development: "...all studies show that irrespectively everyone will gain something from disarmament". Then how can the church accept that so much money is used for armament when she knows that the money could relieve millions of hunger and poverty? One of the small hopes that we glimpsed during the hearing was the statement that because of financial reasons the world might be forced to slow down its armament race.

The proposal of a freeze on all production of nuclear warheads was convincingly introduced by an American expert. Ms. Randall Forsberg referred to how pressure from popular movements in 1963 forced the superpowers to enact a ban on nuclear testing in the atmosphere, and she contended that a similar movement for a freeze might be equally effective as the small, but important first step towards reductions in armament.

The hearing group published a preliminary report based on the testimonies heard. It is disappointingly vague in its conclusions, but it will hopefully mean that the churches and Christians involve themselves in this issue. Failing to find a solution to the mad situation we are trapped in, could put the world on the verge of total destruction. Any argument that the church should not involve herself in the fight to prevent such a catastrophe would fail to see that also the church has a responsibility for the world as God's creation. Maybe Rev. Günter Krusche of the DDR (German Democratic Republic) put forward the greatest challenge, not only to the hearing but also the churches, when challenging the group to consider the usage of nuclear arms

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to be a question of "status confessionis" meaning that such use has to be rejected as a matter of confessing the Christian faith.

This is a question which should be raised in our churches worldwide - the question of whether declaring any use of nuclear weapons to be totally immoral and incompatible with confessing God as creator of heaven and earth. To reach such a conclusion, is that the fight to be fought by young people - for the sake of our future? I think so.

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**LETTER TO THE EDITOR: Youth Self-Discovery** - by Nathan Elias Kapofi, Evangelical Lutheran  
Ovambokavango Church

It is my personal pleasure to have a chance to talk to you all the youth of the Lutheran churches all over the world through your own newsletter. I would have loved us all exchange ideas, admonish advice and encourage each other but this time allow me just to share with you one word or two.

Finally I am bringing to you young greetings coming all the way from Namibia. You may ask the whereabouts of Namibia geographically while at the same time you talk about Namibia and think about and pray for it. When you pray for the afflicted and the suffering - you mean Namibians also. When you confess your faith and belief "in the communion of saints" you have the Namibians included, both young and old. My point here is that you may not be aware of the geographical position of Namibia on the globe, but in faith you are together with the Namibian people "in the communion of saints" for we are all children of God through faith in Jesus Christ. We are not apathetic children of God. We are made to know Him, to love Him, and to serve Him. This must be manifested in our love towards one another (our neighbours) as ourselves (Lk. 10:27).

In the second place perhaps we could have a point of self-discovery. Have you discovered the secret of your youth? Let us face it. Suppose you go shopping. You collect some ideas and thoughts on the quality of the article you wish to buy. It must be new; it must be strong too so that it can last long. These are the qualities of youth which have prompted me to write to you, to give you a guide for youth self-discovery.

In 1 John 2:14b Paul writes: "I write to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the evil one". Discovered yourself? How? You are young - new, beautiful, clean, good, necessary. All of you both boys and girls are included in "young men" for this goes back to humanity "Adam".

You are strong - powerful, robust, healthy, dynamic. All of you, boys and girls, are forceful, energetic and hard working. Is that all? Perhaps not, but for the time being let that be sufficient.

What is the source of your strength? Do you know? Yes, it is the word of God which abides in you. The living Word transmitted through Scripture, through Christ, through the sacraments, through preaching and through the life of the church. Through His Word God reveals Himself supremely in Jesus Christ. Am I sounding too highly Lutheran? Then we go back to the Scripture. John 1:1 - there you read of the Word - God. So when we talk about the Word of God we talk of God. You have received Him and He gave you power to become children of God (John 1:12). This is the power of the Holy Spirit Jesus Christ promised and gave to His disciples which gave them power to witness to Him.

The power of the Spirit is the conquering power. In allowing his disciples to "receive the Holy Spirit" (John 20:22b), Jesus gives them the opportunity and power to overcome the evil one.

That is wonderful, dear youth! Jesus has made us more than conquerors by the power of the Holy Spirit, the overcoming spirit. This spirit makes us overcome

- |                                    |                    |
|------------------------------------|--------------------|
| a) fear                            | e) self-rejection  |
| b) laziness                        | f) evil structures |
| c) complexes: superior or inferior | g) the devil       |
| d) illiteracy and ignorance        |                    |

It is the spirit of freedom, liberation, commitment and responsibility. It liberates us towards

- love to our neighbours
- prayer and study of the Word of God
- mission in our congregations and in the church both locally, continentally and universally
- faith and new life in Jesus Christ.

( M O R E )

That is the spirit of youth, strength, faith and its newness; the overcoming spirit given to you at Pentecost. It makes the youth the glory and joy of the church (1 Jes. 2:20). It keeps the youth rejoicing in their hope; being patient in their tribulation and constant in prayer for the church (Rom. 12:12).

I envy you for your strength and newness of the overcoming spirit in you. Nevertheless, my brothers and sisters whom I love and long for, you are my joy and my crown. I admonish you therefore to stand firm in the Lord, my beloved (Phil. 4:1) for it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment, so that you may approve what is excellent, and may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, filled with the fruits of righteousness which comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.

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### RETROSpective

#### "FAITH AND JUSTICE" CONFERENCE IN ITALY

How is it possible to work for justice from a church base? Should the church work with movements? If so, how? How do we enable young people to challenge the church to action in renewal and unity?

These questions indicate which issues were dealt with in an international conference on "Faith and Justice", held in Torino, Italy, June 17-25, 1981, under the auspices of the Youth Sub-Unit of the World Council of Churches. Fifty participants representing eight regions were gathered to explore the issues related to the overall theme of faith and justice. A message from the conference elaborates how the church can act in the present struggle for liberation and justice in the various regions. For more information turn to the WCC Youth Sub-Unit to obtain a copy of "Youth", Vol. 5, No. 3. [Youth]

#### YOUTH DESK ESTABLISHED IN INDIA

From January 1, 1982, the United Evangelical Lutheran Churches in India will have their first Youth Director staffing the recently established Youth Desk. This is part of a new emphasis on youth and student work within the churches. The national youth committee has been allowed to have their representative on the Executive Committee, and Mr. G.R. Samuel, the chairperson of the youth committee, is presently representing the youth. A national conference of youth will undertake projects of witness and service regionally and nationally.

#### TOWARDS A NATIONAL STUDENT CHRISTIAN MOVEMENT FOR THE UNITED STATES

A national student Christian movement for the United States may be the result of actions taken last August at a national ecumenical conference at Berkeley, California. The 300 participants decided to form a National Interim Committee (NIC). The first national ecumenical student conference in many years, which was held just after the 28th General Assembly of the World Student Christian Federation, grew out of a joint effort by representatives of student Christian movements, campus ministries and national church agencies. The planning committee included individuals from the National Student YMCA, Lutheran Student Movement, California SCM and New England SCM, the Association of Student Christian Leaders (affiliated with Martin Luther King Jr. Center in Atlanta), the National Campus Ministry Association and several denominational executives.

The NIC will "support the efforts of student Christian movements committed to ecumenical participation and witness to the local, national and global mission in the proclamation of the Gospel. It will also engage in "an analysis of current political situations and reflect theologically on these situations". And the committee will have the task of finding funds for a national assembly to be held in two years, for paid staff, regional conferences, communications and programs, and to support local movements.

[United Methodist Communications]

#### THE 28TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF WSCF HELD IN SAN FRANCISCO

Opposition to the Moral Majority because of their "narrow and militaristic" interpretation of Christianity. Support of the striking air controllers. Support of the Cuban, Nicaraguan and Grenadan revolutions. Condemnation of human rights being violated in Chile and El Salvador. Expression of outrage at SCM members being imprisoned in the Philippines and South Korea.

These were some of the issues on which the World Student Christian Federation made resolutions during its 28th General Assembly meeting, held in San Francisco, August 11-22, this year. The assembly which took place in the United States for the first time since 1913, had delegates from more than 80 nations - wrestling with the form and structure of the ecumenical student witness in the 1980s. It decided to put priority on movement building and leadership development, theology and ecumenism, political involvement, education, finances, communications and women's participation.

Mr. Juan Antonio Franco, a doctoral candidate in sociology from Puerto Rico, was elected the new chairperson, and Ms. Lydi Nacpil, a student of the University of the Philippines, was elected the new vice-chairperson. Dr. Emidio Campi was re-elected as general secretary for a new four year's term.

"It is with great joy that we share the message of hope" were the closing words of the assembly. "To our student Christian movements in repressive regimes who are struggling with your lives and future, we humbly offer our solidarity and are cordially inspired by your living witness. To our friends in the ecumenical community, we share with you the ecumenical vision of the renewal of the church and a renewed society. We invite you in this journey of faith and struggle to rise up and build together."

[United Methodist Communications]

4500 YOUTHS AT ALL-LCA YOUTH GATHERING, INDIANA

The all-LCA (Lutheran Church in America) youth gathering which took place July 20-24, drew about 4,500 participants from the United States, Canada and the Caribbean. The theme for the gathering was "JOY FOR YOU AND ME" with daily themes emphasizing "Joy in Baptism", "Joy and Suffering", "Joy through Justice" and "Joy for the World". Among the speakers there were also two former hostages who had been through the ordeal in Iran. Both credited their religious faith with enabling them to cope with the enormous strain of being kept for 444 days.

Various workshops were offered during the gathering, and music of all varieties - ranging from a fiddler and a guitarist to a big choir of more than 200, was enjoyed throughout the meeting. An offering taken at the closing communion service netted US\$ 10,182 with the proceeds to be divided between the LCA World Hunger Appeal, aid to warstricken churches in Namibia and the Hispanic Community Ministry in Arizona.

[News of the LCA]

## PERSpective

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10,000 YOUTH TO MEET IN SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS, 1983

The next youth gathering sponsored by the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod is scheduled to be held in San Antonio, Texas, August 13-17, 1983. This is the decision made by the LCMS Board of Youth Ministry at its meeting in April. The youth gathering held last year in Colorado drawing nearly 5,000 participants proved to be such much of a success that the decision of holding a gathering in 1983 aiming at nearly 10,000 was made. The board also named its executive secretary, Rich Bimler, as 1983 gathering executive director.

[The LCMS Dept. of PR]

YOUTH CONVENTION IN VANCOUVER, JULY 1982

*ALWAYS IS FOREVER* will be the catchphrase and the theme of the sixth biennial all-Canadian inter-Lutheran youth convention to be held in Vancouver, British Columbia, July 11-18, 1982. It will be organized by the "Canadian Lutheran Youth Gatherings" which is the name of the preparatory committee appointed by the three Lutheran church bodies in Canada. The gathering which is expected to draw about 1,500 young people, will be housed in Totem Park, the University of British Columbia's student residences. Information and registration materials can be obtained by contacting: Wallace Loge, 10815-76 Avenue, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, T6E 1M1.

PREPARATIONS UNDER WAY FOR THE INTERNATIONAL YOUTH YEAR 1985

1985 has been designated by the United Nations as the "International Youth Year" with *Participation, Development and Peace* as catchwords for the angles of involvement in planning and executing the programs leading up to the year. The Youth Unit of the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs in Vienna is in charge of coordinating the planning worldwide. The unit is publishing a "Youth Information Bulletin" which can be obtained on request to the organization. Address: Room E-1371, Vic. P.O. 500, A-1400 Vienna, Austria. Tel. 0222-2631-4177.

STEWARDS TO THE WCC GENERAL ASSEMBLY, VANCOUVER 1983

The World Council of Churches Youth Sub-Unit is presently accepting applications from young people (below 30) wanting to serve as stewards during the General Assembly of the WCC in Vancouver, Canada, July 16 - August 11, 1983. The stewards will assist in practical matters running the Assembly, but they will also form their own group with special programs. In addition the stewards will be invited to attend the Pre-Assembly Youth Event. The DEADLINE for applications is February 28, 1982. And application forms are available by writing to the WCC Youth Sub-Unit, P.O. Box 66, CH-1211 Geneva 20, Switzerland.

It is the intention of the LWF Youth Desk to allot some of the budget for "Youth and Students" 1983 for support of Lutheran youths who want to be involved as stewards. How much support we will be able to give has to be decided at a later stage. The selection, however, will be made in cooperation with the WCC Youth Sub-Unit, so the applications are to be sent directly to the WCC - but a copy to the LWF Youth Desk for information is welcome.

PRE-ASSEMBLY YOUTH EVENT IN VANCOUVER 1983

A Pre-Assembly Youth Event before the General Assembly of the WCC will take place in Vancouver, Canada, July 17-22, 1983. About 300 young people, all invited delegates, are expected to gather for this event. Preparations are already under way for the Youth Event as well as the General Assembly. The theme of the Assembly will be "*Jesus Christ - the Life of the World*". Bible studies focusing on the theme are shortly published to be used in youth groups. Anyone interested in using the material can obtain it by writing to the WCC Sub-Unit on Youth, which hopes to get as many reactions and suggestions as possible.

DEAR LORD,

In our prayers today we want to pray especially for the young people on this earth. We realize that it is becoming increasingly difficult for young people to find their way in this complex world with its many negative aspects and problems. Lord, give the youth the courage, strength and faith to overcome their fears, prejudices, hatred toward others and their identity crisis. Help them to discover a sense and meaning in life and help them in their search for value systems. In a world where real peace does not seem to exist, help and guide all the young people that are involved in the struggle for peace, nuclear disarmament, political and economic freedom and for basic human rights.

Lord, very often it is the youth that are affected in a particularly hard way by grave problems and injustices. We ask you to be with all those who are hit by the increasing unemployment figures. Be with all those who do not even get the chance to go to school, who do not receive some kind of basic education. Be with all those young people who are exploited in some way or another, those who at an early age have to work like slaves to help support their families. We pray for all the youth who are persecuted, tortured or thrown into prison because of their political or religious convictions. Give all these people the hope and strength they need to survive in their fight for liberation. We also pray for those who are involved in the production of military equipment and especially those who are doing military service.

Lord, at this time of the year we are preparing for the Christmas festival. We pray that you will be with all of us during this time of advent. We at the same time pray for the youth who will not be celebrating Christmas the way they would like to. We also pray for those many young people who have never heard of Christianity or Christmas before and for those who believe in another religion.

Lord, a group that is very often forgotten in our prayers are the children, especially the very little ones. They are frequently put into this world and confronted with problems they did not create, but which they are then later on supposed to solve. We pray for all the millions of innocent children and ask that you will be with them, their parents, relatives or other close persons, as they grow up. We ask for your blessing of all the young people in this world. \*\*\*\*